



# NASA Procedural Requirements

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**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**

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## Risk Classification for NASA Payloads

**Responsible Office: Office of Safety and Mission Assurance**

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# Preface

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## P.1 PURPOSE

This NPR establishes baseline criteria that enable a user to define the risk classification level for NASA payloads on human- or nonhuman-rated launch systems or carrier vehicles and the design and test philosophy and the common assurance practices applicable to each level. The establishment of the risk level early in the program/project provides the basis for program and project managers to develop and implement appropriate mission assurance and risk management strategies and requirements and to effectively communicate the acceptable level of risk.

## P.2 APPLICABILITY

P.2.1 This NPR applies to NASA Headquarters, NASA Centers, and to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and other contractors to the extent specified in their respective contracts.

P.2.2 This document applies to programs and projects governed by NPR 7120.5, NASA Program and Project Management Processes and Requirements.

P.2.3 This NPR applies to NASA payloads and does not apply to launch systems or carrier vehicles. Application of this NPR to on-orbit services or non-NASA payloads provided to NASA as a result of foreign collaborations is at the discretion of the responsible NASA Enterprise.

P.2.4 This NPR takes precedence over all other lower level documents.

P.2.5 The following definitions apply:

- a. Payload - Any airborne or space equipment or material that is not an integral part of the carrier vehicle (i.e., not part of the carrier aircraft, balloon, sounding rocket, expendable or recoverable launch vehicle). Included are items such as free-flying automated spacecraft, Space Shuttle payloads, Space Station payloads, Expendable Launch Vehicle payloads, flight hardware and instruments designed to conduct experiments, and payload support equipment.
- b. NASA Payload - Any payload for which NASA has design, development, test, or operations responsibility.

## P.3 AUTHORITY

42 U.S.C. 2473 (c)(1), Section 203 (c)(1) of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended.

## P.4 REFERENCES

- a. NPD 1000.1, NASA Strategic Plan.
- b. NPD 1280.1, NASA Management System Policy.
- c. NPD 7120.4, Program/Project Management.
- d. NPD 8700.1, NASA Policy for Safety and Mission Success.
- e. NPD 8700.2, NASA Policy for Safety and Mission Assurance (SMA) for Experimental Aerospace Vehicles (EAV).
- f. NPD 8720.1, NASA Reliability and Maintainability (R&M) Program Policy.
- g. NPD 8730.2, NASA Parts Policy.

- h. NPD 8730.4, Software Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) Policy.
- i. NPR 1000.2, NASA Strategic Management Handbook.
- j. NPR 1000.3, The NASA Organization
- k. NPR 7120.5, NASA Program and Project Management Processes and Requirements.
- l. NPR 8000.4, Risk Management Procedural Requirements.
- m. NPR 8621.1, NASA Procedural Requirements for Mishap Reporting, Investigating, and Recordkeeping.
- n. NPR 8705.5, Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA) Procedures for NASA Programs and Projects.
- o. NPR 8715.3, NASA Safety Manual.
- p. NPR 8735.1, Procedures For Exchanging Parts, Materials, and Safety Problem Data Utilizing the Government-Industry Data Exchange Program and NASA Advisories.
- q. NPR 8735.2, Management of Government Safety and Mission Assurance Surveillance Functions for NASA Contracts.
- r. NASA-STD-8729.1, Planning, Developing and Managing an Effective Reliability and Maintainability (R&M) Program.
- s. NSTS 13830, Payload Safety Review and Data Submittal Requirements for Payloads using the Space Shuttle and International Space Station.

## P.5 CANCELLATION

None.

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/S/  
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# CHAPTER 1. General Information

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## 1.1 Overview

1.1.1 NPR 7120.5, NASA Program and Project Management Processes and Requirements, defines acceptable risk as "Risk that is understood and agreed to by the program/project, Governing Program Management Committee (GPMC), Enterprise, Centers, and other customers sufficient to achieve defined success criteria within approved level of resources."

1.1.2 All parties are better able to understand the acceptable risk associated with a program or project when authorization documents and Level 1 requirements include information regarding the relative risk level.

1.1.3 The basic assurance principles and practices associated with the different risk classification levels as indicated in Appendix B are included to further strengthen the understanding and communication at all levels of the NASA organization and program/project teams.

## 1.2. Risk Classification Development

1.2.1 As early in the formulation process as possible, the Enterprise shall establish an acceptable risk classification level for each NASA and NASA-sponsored payload. As with all requirements, the risk classification level may evolve throughout the iterative formulation process, but shall be formally documented and approved in program/project plans and Level 1 requirements prior to the Preliminary Design Review and transition into the implementation phase ([Requirement 32906](#)).

1.2.2 For consistency in definition, four risk levels or classifications have been characterized in Appendix A. The classification levels define a hierarchy of risk combinations for NASA payloads by considering such factors as criticality to the Agency Strategic Plan, national significance, availability of alternative research opportunities, success criteria, magnitude of investment, and other relevant factors.

1.2.3 Any equipment that constitutes a payload, or part of a payload, may be separately classified. For example, a Class A satellite may incorporate multiple instruments individually classified A through D.

## 1.3. Assurance Program Development and Implementation

1.3.1 With the acceptable risk classification level established, using Appendix B as the guideline, the project can define and apply the appropriate management controls, systems engineering processes, mission assurance requirements, and risk management processes. Guidelines for safety, mission assurance, design, and test are provided in Appendix B.

1.3.2 Centers and Enterprises shall develop or update policies, standards, and/or guidelines to adapt and expand upon the examples in Appendix B for the unique needs of their programs and projects ([Requirement 32911](#)). Each subset of guidelines described by the examples in Appendix B is intended to serve as a starting point for establishment of assurance criteria, mission design, and test programs tailored to the needs of a specific project. The intent is to generate discussion of implementation methodologies in order for the programs, projects, Centers, the GPMC, and the Enterprise to make informed decisions.

1.3.3 In all cases, this does not limit or constrain the flexibility of a project to deviate from the guidelines, provided that the concurrence and approvals of cognizant Center organizations, GPMCs, and the Enterprise offices are obtained for the specific project approach ([Requirement 32912](#)).

1.3.4 Regardless of risk classification level designation, all payloads should be developed using sound management, engineering, manufacturing, and verification practices.

1.3.5 All programs/projects shall conform to all applicable NASA safety requirements ([Requirement 32914](#)).

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## CHAPTER 2. Risk Classification Responsibilities

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### 2.1 Enterprise Offices shall:

- a. Establish and document the risk classification level for each payload or payload element ([Requirement 32917](#)). The Enterprise Office may establish the class designation at the level of assembly it considers appropriate for each project.
- b. Concur on/approve the project approach for achieving the risk classification level designated, including deviations from the guidelines) ([Requirement 32919](#)).
- c. Establish a set of mission Level 1 requirements for each payload or payload element that reflects the key objectives of the program ([Requirement 32920](#)).
- d. Notify the NASA Chief Engineer of the assigned payload risk classification level ([Requirement 32921](#)).

### 2.2 GPMC shall:

- a. Concur on the risk classification level ([Requirement 32923](#)).
- b. Concur on the project's approach to achieving the risk classification level designated ([Requirement 32924](#)).
- c. Concur on the acceptance of all primary risks, as defined by NPR 7120.5 ([Requirement 32925](#)).

### 2.3 Project offices shall:

- a. Recommend a risk classification level designation for proposed payload or payload element ([Requirement 32927](#)).
- b. Recommend appropriate risk classification levels for lower levels of assembly ([Requirement 32928](#)).
- c. Plan and implement a balanced development/acquisition approach for achieving the risk classification level designated ([Requirement 32929](#)).
- d. Coordinate the development/acquisition plan and implementation with the Enterprise office ([Requirement 32930](#)).
- e. Maintain project approval documentation to include current risk classification level designation together with a description of any deviations from the guidelines in Appendix B ([Requirement 32931](#)). This is typically documented in the risk management section of the project plan.

### 2.4 The Associate Administrator for Safety and Mission Assurance shall:

- a. Exercise general oversight and coordinate Agencywide implementation of this NPR ([Requirement 32933](#)).
- b. Support Enterprise offices in the development and review of payload risk classification level designations ([Requirement 32934](#)).

2.5 Center Safety and Mission Assurance organizations shall provide input to the project office assessment and recommendation of risk classification levels and assess the risks associated with the tailoring selections of Center safety and mission assurance requirements per Appendix B ([Requirement 32935](#)).

2.6 The Office of the Chief Engineer shall serve as the Agencywide focal point for collection and correlation of payload risk classification levels and in-flight failure information and dissemination of lessons learned ([Requirement 32936](#)).



## Appendix A - Classification Considerations for NASA Class A-D Payloads

Four risk levels or classifications have been characterized in Appendix A. The classification considerations in this appendix provide a structured approach for defining a hierarchy of risk combinations for NASA payloads by considering such factors as criticality to the Agency Strategic Plan, national significance, availability of alternative research opportunities or reflight opportunities, success criteria, magnitude of investment, and other relevant factors. Additional or alternate classification considerations may be applied to a specific payload or payload element. The importance weighting assigned to each consideration is at the discretion of the responsible NASA Enterprise office.

<b><u>Characterization</u></b>	<b><u>Class A</u></b>	<b><u>Class B</u></b>	<b><u>Class C</u></b>	<b><u>Class D</u></b>
<b>Priority (Criticality to Agency Strategic Plan) and Acceptable Risk Level</b>	High priority, very low (minimized) risk	High priority, low risk	Medium priority, medium risk	Low priority, high risk
<b>National significance</b>	Very high	High	Medium	Low to medium
<b>Complexity</b>	Very high to high	High to medium	Medium to low	Medium to low
<b>Mission Lifetime (Primary Baseline Mission)</b>	Long, >5years	Medium, 2-5 years	Short,	Short < 2 years
<b>Cost</b>	High	High to medium	Medium to low	Low
<b>Launch Constraints</b>	Critical	Medium	Few	Few to none
<b>In-Flight Maintenance</b>	N/A	Not feasible or difficult	Maybe feasible	May be feasible and planned
<b>Alternative Research Opportunities or Re-flight Opportunities</b>	No alternative or re-flight opportunities	Few or no alternative or re-flight opportunities	Some or few alternative or re-flight opportunities	Significant alternative or re-flight opportunities
<b>Achievement of Mission Success Criteria</b>	All practical measures are taken to achieve minimum risk to mission success. The highest assurance standards are used.	Stringent assurance standards with only minor compromises in application to maintain a low risk to mission success.	Medium risk of not achieving mission success may be acceptable. Reduced assurance standards are permitted.	Medium or significant risk of not achieving mission success is permitted. Minimal assurance standards are permitted.
<b>Examples</b>	HST, Cassini, JIMO	MER, MRO, Discovery payloads, ISS Facility Class Payloads, Attached ISS payloads	ESSP, Explorer Payloads (MIDEX, SMEX), ISS complex subrack payloads	SPARTAN, GAS Can, technology demonstrators, simple ISS, express middeck and subrack payloads

NOTES:



1. Mission impact; i.e., loss of function effect on other payloads or ISS operations may also be a characterization factor. For example, loss of the function of freezers and centrifuges may impact other payloads and increase the overall level of risk.
2. The safety risk to crew inherent in the operation of a human-crewed vehicle may be a factor in payload classification determinations. Class C and D payloads that have a medium or high risk of not achieving mission success may be considered unsuitable for launch on a crewed vehicle, unless they are secondary payloads making use of available launch capacity that would otherwise go unused.
3. Other situation-dependent payload classification considerations may include human-rating environment, logistics support, and interoperability interfaces.

## Appendix B - Recommended SMA-Related Program Requirements for NASA Class A-D Payloads

	CLASS A	CLASS B	CLASS C	CLASS D
<b>Single Point Failures (SPFs)</b>	Critical SPFs (for Level 1 requirements) are not permitted unless authorized by formal waiver. Waiver approval of critical SPFs requires justification based on risk analysis and implementation of measures to mitigate risk.	Critical SPFs (for Level 1 requirements) may be permitted but are minimized and mitigated by use of high reliability parts and additional testing. Essential spacecraft functions and key instruments are typically fully redundant. Other hardware has partial redundancy and/or provisions for graceful degradation.	Critical SPFs (for Level 1 requirements) may be permitted but are mitigated by use of high reliability parts, additional testing, or by other means. Single string and selectively redundant design approaches may be used.	Same as Class C.
<b>Engineering Model, Prototype, Flight, and Spare Hardware</b>	Engineering model hardware for new or modified designs. Separate prototype and flight model hardware. Full set of assembled and tested "flight spare" replacement units.	Engineering model hardware for new or significantly modified designs. Protoflight hardware (in lieu of separate prototype and flight models) except where extensive qualification testing is anticipated. Spare (or refurbishable prototype) hardware as needed to avoid major program impact.	Engineering model hardware for new designs. Protoflight hardware permitted (in lieu of separate prototype and flight models). Limited flight spare hardware (for long lead flight units).	Limited engineering model and flight spare hardware.
<b>Qualification, Acceptance, and Protoflight Test Program</b>	Full formal qualification and acceptance test programs and integrated end-to-end testing at all hardware and software levels.	Formal qualification and acceptance test programs and integrated end-to-end testing at all hardware levels. May use a combination of qualification and protoflight hardware. Qualified software simulators used to verify software and system.	Limited qualification testing for new aspects of the design plus full acceptance test program. Testing required for verification of safety compliance and interface compatibility.	Testing required only for verification of safety compliance and interface compatibility. Acceptance test program for critical performance parameters.
<b>EEE Parts</b> * <a href="http://nepp.nasa.gov/index_nasa.cfm/641">http://nepp.nasa.gov/index_nasa.cfm/641</a>	NASA Parts Selection List (NPSL)* Level 1, Level 1 equivalent Source Control Drawings (SCDs), and/or requirements per Center Parts Management Plan.	Class A requirements or NPSL Level 2, Level 2 equivalent SCDs, and/or requirements per Center Parts Management Plan.	Class A, Class B or NPSL Level 3, Level 3 equivalent SCDs, and/or requirements per Center Parts Management Plan.	Class A, Class B, or Class C requirements, and/or requirements per Center Parts Management Plan.
<b>Reviews</b>	Full formal review program. Either IPAO external independent reviews or independent reviews managed at the Center level with Enterprise Office participation. Include formal inspections of software requirements, design, verification documents, and code.	Full formal review program. Either IPAO external independent reviews or independent reviews managed at the Center level with Enterprise Office participation. Include formal inspections of software requirements, design, verification documents, and peer reviews of code.	Full formal review program. Independent reviews managed at Center level with Enterprise Office participation. Include formal inspections of software requirements, peer reviews of design and code.	Center level reviews with participation of all applicable directorates. May be delegated to Projects. Peer reviews of software requirements and code.
<b>Safety* NPD 8700.1</b>	Per all applicable NASA safety standards.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.
<b>Materials</b>	Verify heritage of previously used materials and qualify all new or changed materials and applications/configurations. Use source controls on procured materials and acceptance test each lot/batch.	Use previously tested/flown materials or qualify new materials and applications/configurations. Acceptance test each lot of procured materials.	Use previously tested/flown materials or characterize new materials. Acceptance test sample lots of procured materials.	Requirements are based on applicable safety standards. Materials should be assessed for application and life limits.
<b>Mishap Investigation Board Requirements</b> *NPR 8621.1	Initiated and conducted per NPR 8621.1.	Initiated and conducted per NPR 8621.1.	Initiated and conducted per NPR 8621.1.	Initiated and conducted per NPR 8621.1.

<b>Reliability *NPD 8720.1</b>	Failure mode and effects analysis/critical items list (FMEA/CIL), worst-case performance, and parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits. Mechanical reliability, human, and other reliability analysis where appropriate.	FMEA/CIL at black box (or circuit block diagram) level as a minimum. Worst-case performance and parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits.	FMEA/CIL scope determined at the project level. Analysis of interfaces. Parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits.	Analysis requirements based on applicable safety requirements. Analysis of interface.
<b>Reliability *NPD 8720.1</b>	Failure mode and effects analysis/critical items list (FMEA/CIL), worst-case performance, and parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits. Mechanical reliability, human, and other reliability analysis where appropriate.	FMEA/CIL at black box (or circuit block diagram) level as a minimum. Worst-case performance and parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits.	FMEA/CIL scope determined at the project level. Analysis of interfaces. Parts electrical stress analysis for all parts and circuits.	Analysis requirements based on applicable safety requirements. Analysis of interface.
<b>Fault Tree Analysis</b>	System level qualitative fault tree analysis.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.	Fault tree analysis required for safety critical functions.
<b>Probabilistic Risk Assessment *NPR 8705.xx</b>	Full Scope, addressing all applicable end states per NPR 8705.xx.	Limited Scope, focusing on mission-related end-states of specific decision making interest per NPR 8705.xx.	Simplified, identifying major mission risk contributors. Other discretionary applications.	Safety only. Other discretionary applications.
<b>Maintainability<sup>1</sup> *NPD 8720.1</b>	As required by NPD 8720.1	Application of NPD 8720.1 determined by program. (Typically ground elements only.)	Maintainability considered during design if applicable.	Requirements based on applicable safety standards.
<b>Quality Assurance *NPD 8730.3 * NPR 8735.2 * NPR 1280.1 (NPR 8735.1A)</b>	Formal quality assurance program including closed-loop problem reporting and corrective action, configuration management, performance trending, and stringent surveillance. GIDEP failure experience data and NASA Advisory process.	Formal quality assurance program including closed-loop problem reporting and corrective action, configuration management, performance trending, moderate surveillance. GIDEP failure experience data and NASA Advisory process.	Formal quality assurance program including closed-loop problem reporting and corrective action, configuration management, tailored surveillance. GIDEP failure experience data and NASA Advisory process.	Closed-loop problem reporting and corrective action, configuration management, GIDEP failure experience data and NASA Advisory process. Other requirements based on applicable safety standards.
<b>Software *NPD 8730.4</b>	Formal project software assurance program. Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) as determined by AA OSMA.	Formal project software assurance program. IV&V as determined by AA OSMA.	Formal project software assurance program. IV&V as determined by AA OSMA.	Formal project software assurance insight. IV&V as determined by AA OSMA.
<b>Risk Management *NPR 7120.5</b>	Risk Management Program. Risk reporting to GPMC.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.
<b>Telemetry Coverage</b>	During all mission critical events to assure data is available for critical anomaly investigations to prevent future recurrence.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.	Same as Class A.

<sup>1</sup>For ISS payloads, maintainability, reliability, and availability requirements should be defined at an early phase and plans addressed during the design, development, and testing of the payload, regardless of class. Components with low reliability should be assessed for on-orbit maintainability based on the availability requirements, and other relevant factors. The balance of these factors should result in a payload that meets performance requirements for the required duration of flight.

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## Appendix C. Acronyms

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COTS	Commercial-Off-the-Shelf
ESSP	Earth System Science Pathfinder
FMEA/CIL	Failure Modes and Effects Analysis/Critical Items List
GAS	Get Away Special
GIDEP	Government-Industry Data Exchange Program
GOES	Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite
IPAO	Independent Program Assessment Office
ISS	International Space Station
IV&V	Independent Verification and Validation
JIMO	Jupiter Icy Moons Orbiter
MER	Mars Exploration Rover
MIDEX	Medium Class Explorers
MRO	Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter
NPD	NASA Policy Directive
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
NPSL	NASA Parts Selection List (NPSL): <a href="http://nepp.nasa.gov/index_nasa.cfm/641/">http://nepp.nasa.gov/index_nasa.cfm/641/</a>
GPMC	Governing Program Management Committee
PRA	Probabilistic Risk Assessment
SCD	Source Control Drawing
SMA	Safety and Mission Assurance
SMEX	Small Explorer
SPF	Single Point Failure